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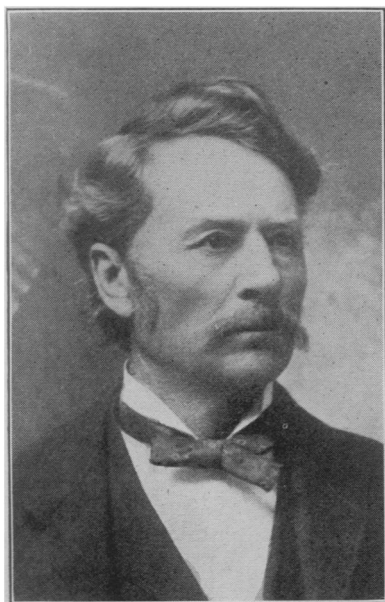
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**JAMES RICHARD MEAD.**

By J. T. LOVEWELL, Topeka.

**I**N THE death of Col. J. R. Mead our Academy has lost one of its life members and one of the oldest living members of our organization. He was a typical Kansas man and a pioneer of frontier life, whose word was always recognized as authority in all questions of history and early life on the plains.



**JAMES RICHARD MEAD.**

Born in Vermont in 1836, his parents removed with him, when three years old, to Davenport, Iowa, where he grew up and obtained his school education. In early manhood he was led by the reports and persuasions of Col. Jas. R. Lane and others to move to the plains of middle and western Kansas, where for the next fifty years he continued to reside, and he took a prominent part in all the vicissitudes of frontier life. These opportunities furnished him with a vast fund of information, which he used in addresses and communications published in the Transactions of the Academy, in Proceedings of the Historical Society, and in various public journals and magazines.

He had a lively interest and took an active part in all work of the Academy, and it was always a treat to hear him recount his early experiences, when thousands of buffalo, elk, deer and other game animals pastured on the plains of western Kansas and crossed them in their migragations northward and southward. Here were the great hunting grounds of the Indians, among whom Colonel Mead established several trading posts, the most important of which was on the present site of Wichita, which thereafter became his home. Its name was adopted from his suggestion that the place had been occupied for years by the Wichita Indians and appropriately should bear their name. In these early days he had great influence with the Indians and was much esteemed by them. He knew many of their chiefs, like Satanta, and Heap-a-bear, as well as the celebrated scouts, Kit Carson, Buffalo Bill and other pioneers; and so, in the time of our civil war, he was able to do much in preserving our frontiers from Indian ravages. He was active in all public affairs, and contributed largely to bring Wichita into prominence and make it the metropolis of southern Kansas. He represented his locality both in the house and in the senate of the Kansas legislature, though political life was not relished by him. He was a leading member in the Academy, in the State Historical Society and in several other organizations, and his numerous contributions to these societies are held in high esteem, exhibiting rare powers of observation as well as a racy piquancy which made their presentation very delightful.

His ancestry were of puritan stock, landing on our shores in 1642, and were prominent in colonial and revolutionary days. His father was a graduate of Yale and was a Presbyterian minister in Vermont and Iowa. Colonel Mead is survived by his third wife and two young daughters, and by a son and two daughters of his first wife. In these descendants his name will be worthily perpetuated.

Our Academy has been fortunate in its comparatively few losses by death in late years, but we are reminded that the ranks are closing up and there are not many left who can bring personal testimony of the conditions that obtained here when our commonwealth was young.